

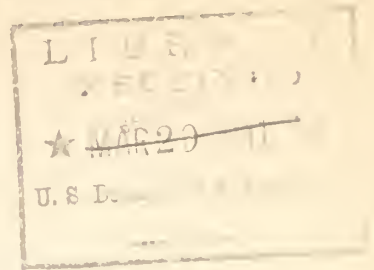
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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Bureau of Agricultural Economics
Washington, D. C.



March 1941

Editorial Reference Series: No. 9

AGRICULTURAL PLANNING THROUGH STATE AND LOCAL COMMITTEES

Farm men and women in more than 1,500 counties throughout the Nation are actively cooperating in an organized attack upon their local agricultural problems through plans and policies developed by their community, county, and State land use planning committees. Approximately 90,000 farm people are farmer representatives on these committees. They serve on the committees with technicians from the State Colleges of Agriculture and the local officials of agencies in the Department of Agriculture.

The members of local and State land use planning committees are analyzing their local problems, and attempting to work out desirable goals for agricultural activities in their areas, in line with over-all national goals and policies. Their plans and recommendations, while dealing primarily with local and State problems, serve as guides to individual, group, and public activities, including the national activities of the Department of Agriculture. The work of these committees is of a continuous nature, aimed at guiding the continuous adjustments, area by area, that are necessitated by constantly changing conditions in agriculture. In this work the farmers, technicians, and administrators of agricultural programs are joint participants, each drawing upon the special knowledge and experience of the other in arriving at plans and recommendations.

Action flowing from the work of planning committees to date includes community cooperation in such projects as home improvements; county action in purchasing needed terracing equipment for farmers; State action in the purchase of submarginal land or in changes of State laws; and Federal action in adjusting conservation practices and allowances. The work of planning committees is assisting materially in guiding local adjustments in such programs as those for rural rehabilitation, soil conservation, agricultural adjustment, credit, and others.

Now, with the advent of the war abroad and the national defense program at home, such planning is even more than an attempt to create a more prosperous and stable agriculture; it is today a vitally necessary part of our national security and defense.

For National Defense

The defense program is causing the location in rural areas of new industries, artillery ranges, army cantonments, and air fields. It is bringing a great expansion of industrial and military employment. Decisions are being made daily with respect to defense activities and projects that directly affect agriculture and farm people. Local people, therefore, have an interest in helping to work out these decisions and in contributing to the speed of decisions and action. Many planning committees, local and State, are working toward this end, developing carefully considered local and State policies, together with recommendations for over-all policies and action needed within the State.

Land use planning, although not begun on a national scale until 1938, has been growing rapidly, both in size and importance. It is proving of great use in the present emergency, not only to local communities affected by defense

activities, but also to the actual defense effort itself. Committees already at work in the county planning process are in many counties extending and intensifying their joint work on agricultural problems, to assist in meeting the needs of defense. They have been called on for numerous quick surveys related to the location of defense industries in rural areas. Among the communities where committees are engaged in defense work are Little Rock, Arkansas; Madison and Union City, Indiana; Burlington, Iowa; Rolla, Missouri; Weldon Springs, near St. Louis, Missouri; Radford, Virginia; Childersburg, Anniston and Gadsden, Alabama; and Camp Edwards, near Sandwich, Massachusetts.

Democratic Objectives

The objectives of land use planning stressed in the beginning were: (1) the fitting of Department of Agriculture and State agricultural programs more closely to the particular local conditions in each area, in line with locally-made plans; (2) the democratic coordination of Department activities in each area, so that all programs within a county and State would be a smoothly working unit in an attack upon the essential needs of each area; and (3) the clarification of relations between the Department of Agriculture and the Land Grant Colleges of the States, a step made necessary by the advent of the Federal programs for direct action to assist the farmer. Through widespread farmer participation in this planning process, a democratic and effective basis for needed integration and improvement was created. In effect, this type of planning and action has now grown to embrace local planning for all kinds of action upon the problems of farm people and their communities.

M. L. Wilson, Director of Extension, has expressed the basic philosophy of planning in this way: "Our goal in land use planning is to help farmers build plans for agriculture out of a fusion of scientific knowledge with their own practical experience."

To bring this about, technicians from the State Colleges, along with the administrators of the Department programs, sit in with the farmers at every stage of the cooperative planning process. At the meetings of local planning committees the members take a joint look at their areas, to learn what can be done to improve conditions. The farmer knows his own people and their attitudes and desires, and also possesses needed information on local conditions and problems; the expert knows technical facts about soils, cropping methods, etc.; and the program administrator knows what his own agency can do to help accomplish the improvements desired by the committee. On this basis, plans and recommendations are worked out for the county along lines satisfactory to all the members. These community and county meetings are the foundation of the planning process.

Last year the committees held 22,000 community committee meetings and 6,200 county committee meetings, in addition to 12,000 open forum discussions. These last were for the purpose of acquainting all persons in the community or in the county with the conclusions, recommendations, and proposals being developed by the land use planning committees, to assure that the plans represent the interests of all the people in the county. In addition to such local meetings, there were 200 meetings of State committees.

Two-Way Process

The results of local planning efforts may reach the Department in two principal ways. First, through the administrative channels of the Department's action agencies involving transmission of proposals and recommendations through local, State, and regional representatives of the agency concerned. Second, through the planning channels themselves, involving community, county, and State land use planning committees and the Interbureau Committees and the Program Board of the Department in Washington.

County land use planning is not restricted to land use in its narrowest sense. County planning committees can and have gone into almost any sort of problem and objective which concerns agriculture and rural life in their county. The objective of the program is to improve the county as a place in which to live and work. In order to attain this objective, planning committees are dealing with problems of health, or tenancy, or education, for instance, as well as better land use.

The Need For Planning

The need for the county planning program was based upon the rapid change that had taken place in the agricultural picture during the last two decades, particularly since 1929. Until after the last war the farmer's great problem was generally looked upon as one of production; in the main, the more he raised the more money he made. In recent years, however, the farmer has found that he has to take into account such things as over-abundance, lost markets, credit needs, soil erosion, and the exhaustion of natural resources -- problems which can be met best through group planning and action.

The local-State-Department machinery for carrying out this planning process may be described as follows:

The community committees are usually composed entirely of farm men and women, and in many cases include forest owners. Usually there are about 10 members. They study local conditions and work closely with the county committee in making and carrying out recommendations.

Beginning At The Grass Roots

The county committee has a majority membership of farmers, with a farmer acting as chairman, but it also includes representatives of closely related

State and Federal agencies operating in the county. The land use planning organization aims at a type of membership which will represent effectively the views and interests of people in each county, including land owners, tenant farmers, farm laborers, sharecroppers, etc. Here the typical committee has from 20 to 25 members of whom about 70 percent are farmers. The technicians and administrators contribute an important service in committee deliberations, particularly in furnishing needed data and in analyzing the physical and economic differences between the land use areas of the county.

The committee planning usually has involved area analysis, mapping, and a land use classification for the county. Work of this kind develops a picture of land resources, the present utilization of these resources, the problems associated with land use, and the types of land use adjustments needed to deal with these problems. It calls attention to changes which should be made, and suggests actions to bring them about. Its recommendations regarding Department of Agriculture programs are for the guidance of local administrators, State administrators, and whenever necessary are referred to the Department in Washington. In many counties the land use classification work has been completed and the planning process has gone on to the next stage, but it is almost invariably necessary that such an inventory be taken before going ahead to other work.

Cooperative Relationships

The step of translating facts, conclusions and recommendations into appropriate action by farmers and agencies is greatly expedited by virtue of the fact that from the beginning agency representatives have worked with the farmers. There is thus less difficulty in translating conclusions and proposals into sound, coordinated action. The farmers and agency representatives confer together and reach agreements as to the improvements needed in the county, and the

lines of action that can be undertaken toward these improvements.

State Planning Committees

The State land use planning committees include at least one representative farmer from each major farming area of the State, the Director of Extension, Director of the Experiment Station, State representative of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, and someone from each State or Department of Agriculture agency managing land use programs in the State. Farm men and women have a slight majority of the membership. In size, these committees range all the way from 16 in Maine to 49 in New York, but usually average around 30 members.

These State committees of late, have taken an increasing part in the national defense effort. Many of the effects of the war emergency are such that they require State, regional, and national planning. The State committees are cooperating in the national defense program by seeking to discover how agriculture can best contribute its share to general preparedness and national welfare, how it can utilize the benefits resulting from the national defense program to bring about needed adjustments in farming, forestry, and rural living, and how it can hold the unfavorable effects of the war and the defense activities on agriculture to a minimum.

State-Wide Needs

In its regular work the State land use planning committees review the recommendations from community and county committees, and are thus able to take into account effectively the needs of each county in making State-wide plans. In effect, the State committee, with the assistance of the Land Grant College-BAE Committee, serves as machinery to handle the broader type of planning activities.

The Land Grant College-BAE Committee is a three-man group for the purpose of coordinating planning and research work. It not only assists the State Committee, but has responsibility for developing planning procedure, encouraging related research work, and formulating the annual project agreement covering the cooperative work of the BAE, the State Extension Service, and the Experiment Station, relating to planning.

Programs At The National Level

When it is necessary for recommendations of the county and State Committee to be referred to Washington, the BAE submits the material to the Inter-Bureau Coordinating Committee for consideration. This committee, composed of representatives from the action agencies and other bureaus of the Department, is a cooperative program-building body. It is concerned with the formulation, development, and appraisal of the farm programs, and of the effectiveness with which it serves both national objectives and local needs. To this committee in Washington come reports and proposals from county and State land use planning committees, from research workers, and from the administrators of the action agencies. The committee, in turn, after thorough investigation and analysis, reports its findings and its recommendations for action to the Agricultural Program Board and to the Secretary of Agriculture. The program board is the general policy-making and policy-reviewing body of the Department, subject, of course, to final decision by the Secretary.

In Defense-Project Areas

Land use planning committees have undertaken a variety of important tasks associated with the defense project areas. These include arranging for farm families to be informed of all the facts regarding the land to be purchased and

their rights in connection with such purchase; recommending the factors that should be taken into account by the optioning agent in appraising dispossession costs, particularly when tenants are involved; participating in surveys to determine the kinds and amounts of help farm families will need in relocating on other farms, or obtaining off-farm employment; assisting in obtaining lists of farms for sale or rent; locating temporary storage space for machinery and equipment and temporary housing for families and livestock; and many other related activities.

Recent work of the county and community land use planning committees in the Radford, Virginia, Defense Area illustrates how planning committees are assisting in the National Defense Program. A new powder plant and a bag-loading plant are being built at Radford, giving jobs to thousands of workers. The National Defense Advisory Commission, recognizing that additional housing would be needed and that the area was largely rural, suggested informally to the Department of Agriculture that it make a survey of the present housing situation and the need for additional housing in the area. This suggestion was relayed to the State Land Use Planning Committee and to the county and community committees in the four counties within the defense area.

The rural housing and labor survey was made in four days by the local planning committees, with the aid of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, and local representatives of the State Planning Staff, the Extension Service, the Farm Security Administration, the Soil Conservation Service, the Agricultural Adjustment Administration, the Farm Credit Administration, Vocational Teachers of Agriculture and Home Economics, and other agencies.

An individual farm-family schedule was taken of some 7,000 farm families in the four counties. About 2,300 were found to be inadequately housed,

but of these 969 were living on farms with adequate soil resources. Also, they were either on or close to all-weather roads leading to the defense plants within 25 miles. The schedules were filled out by the farm men and women members of the community committees, one man and one woman from each neighborhood.

A total of 448 farm men and women participated in the survey, representing farm people from 188 neighborhoods, 34 communities, and four counties. In addition to information collected on the present housing situation, need for additional housing, and availability of farm labor for non-farm employment, invaluable data were gathered on social and economic conditions of the 7000 farms in the areas. These data have been tabulated by neighborhoods, communities and counties and are being currently used by the planning committees in their regular work of developing unified agricultural programs for their respective communities and counties.

The Bureau of Agricultural Economics also assisted in making a housing survey in the six towns adjacent to the defense plants.

The local planning committees recommended 969 sites for new defense houses to be built on farms, to serve later as replacements for present unsatisfactory housing on those farms. The town councils of the six towns formally requested that 1050 new defense houses be apportioned among the towns. Each request was substantiated by a formal report on housing conditions within the town.

After reviewing the plan for defense housing prepared by the Virginia State Agricultural Land Use Planning organization and the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, the Federal Works Agency has authorized the Farm Security Administration to begin construction of 200 dwellings in the Radford Defense Area, 100 to be located on farms in the town of Radford.

The interest of planning committees in defense activities, however, is only one example of the wide scope of the work being undertaken through organized planning. Furthermore, of all the many hundreds of counties engaged in the planning process, the method in no two of them is exactly alike. Instead, all are adjusted to the specific needs and desires of the counties. Some are interested in getting soil conservation districts set up, for instance, and are working toward that end. Others are more concerned with trying to discourage the continued occupancy of poor lands, or in attacking problems of farm tenancy, housing, education, health, marketing, etc. County committees located in such States as Wisconsin or Minnesota have been particularly interested in the proper uses of forest land, and in restoring poor cut-over land to productive forestry.

Example of Work

A good example of the work of county committees is furnished by Caswell County, North Carolina. The county planning committee concluded that one of the outstanding weaknesses in the farming picture in Caswell County was the lack of food and feed supplies to supplement cash incomes. This also meant a shortage of eggs, milk, and meat for home consumption, leading to serious diet deficiencies.

The planning committee decided to attack this basic problem through a live-at-home program, to increase the production of food and feed for home use. This program is carried out in Caswell County through the joint action of the several Federal, State, and local agencies in the county, in close cooperation with the county planning committee. The committee decided recently to intensify the program, and through negotiations with various agencies, obtained a number of agreements.

The Extension Service prepared and sent out practical plans for year round gardens. It held community meetings on the live-at-home program, and also promised to assist the county committee to initiate control work on cattle and hog disease; the Home Demonstration Agent conducted meetings and demonstrations on food preservation.

The Farm Security Administration encouraged the use of part of its loan to clients for planting small orchards, fruits and berries. It required clients to make adequate provision for the canning of food supplies and encouraged every client family to leave one-tenth of an acre in a year-round vegetable garden. The FSA also made community service loans for purchase of purebred bulls, and arranged for every client to have one or more milk cows and not less than 25 chickens. The Agricultural Adjustment Administration made a special effort to get 2500 good-quality gardens started.

In a special effort to reach all the farmers, the county planning committee sent out a letter enclosing a questionnaire to each operator asking to what extent he would cooperate.

The full benefits to the county of this cooperative, over-all program cannot yet be determined, but it is reasonable to assume that Caswell County's land use planning committee has been instrumental in furthering at least a partial solution to a serious economic maladjustment.

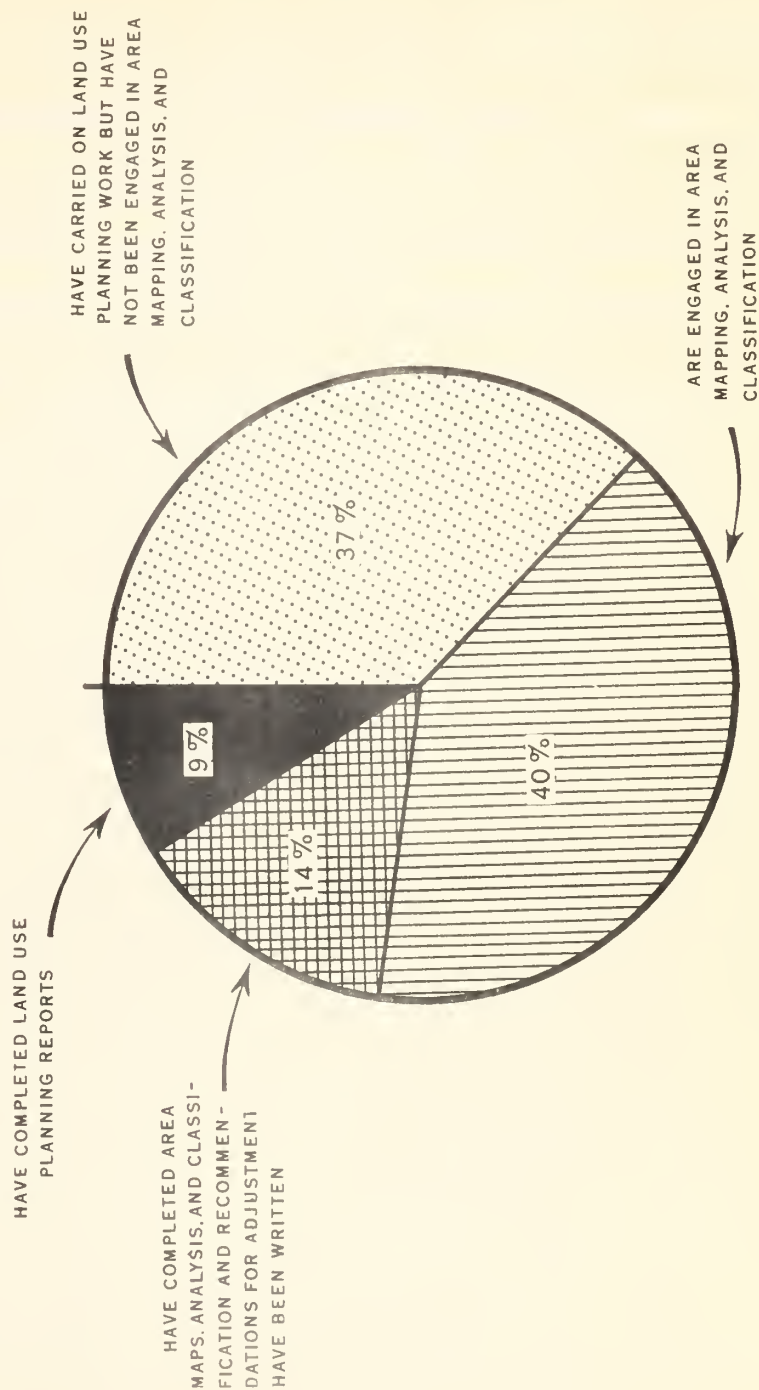
Problems Many and Varied

In other counties, of course, there are other problems. Varied types of measures are being proposed for their solution. Establishment of wildlife management areas, improvement of roads, purchasing of terracing equipment, overhaul of tax structure, and the establishing of safe-guards against insects

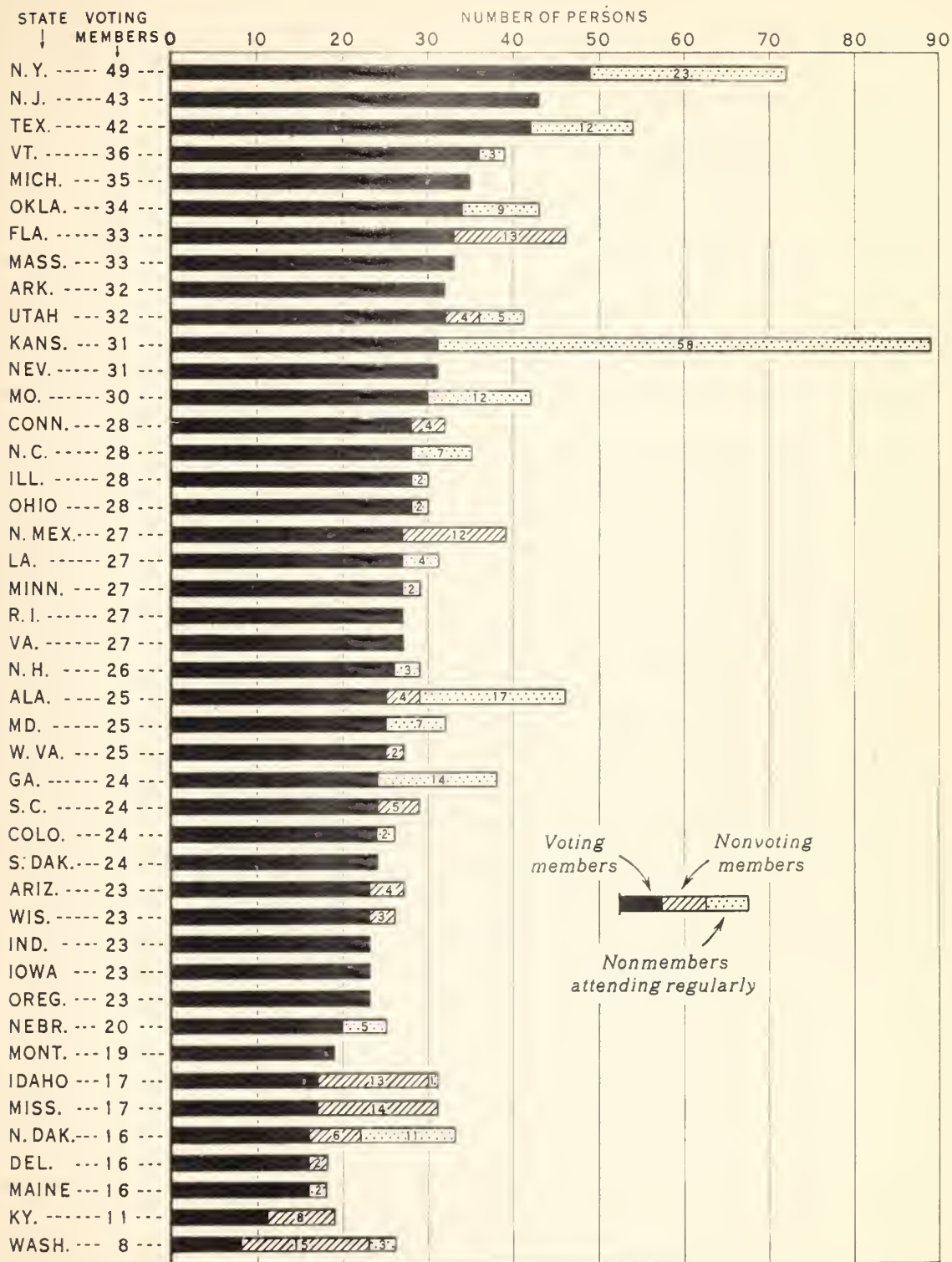
harmful to crops are a few of the steps being taken as result of the planning work, the type of action depending on local needs.

Land use planning has not, of course, been solely responsible for all accomplishments mentioned in this brief survey. In some instances, steps toward solutions probably would have been initiated without it; in others, land use planning provided only the additional stimulus needed to obtain results; but in many cases the committees have identified problems, and proposed and sponsored remedies.

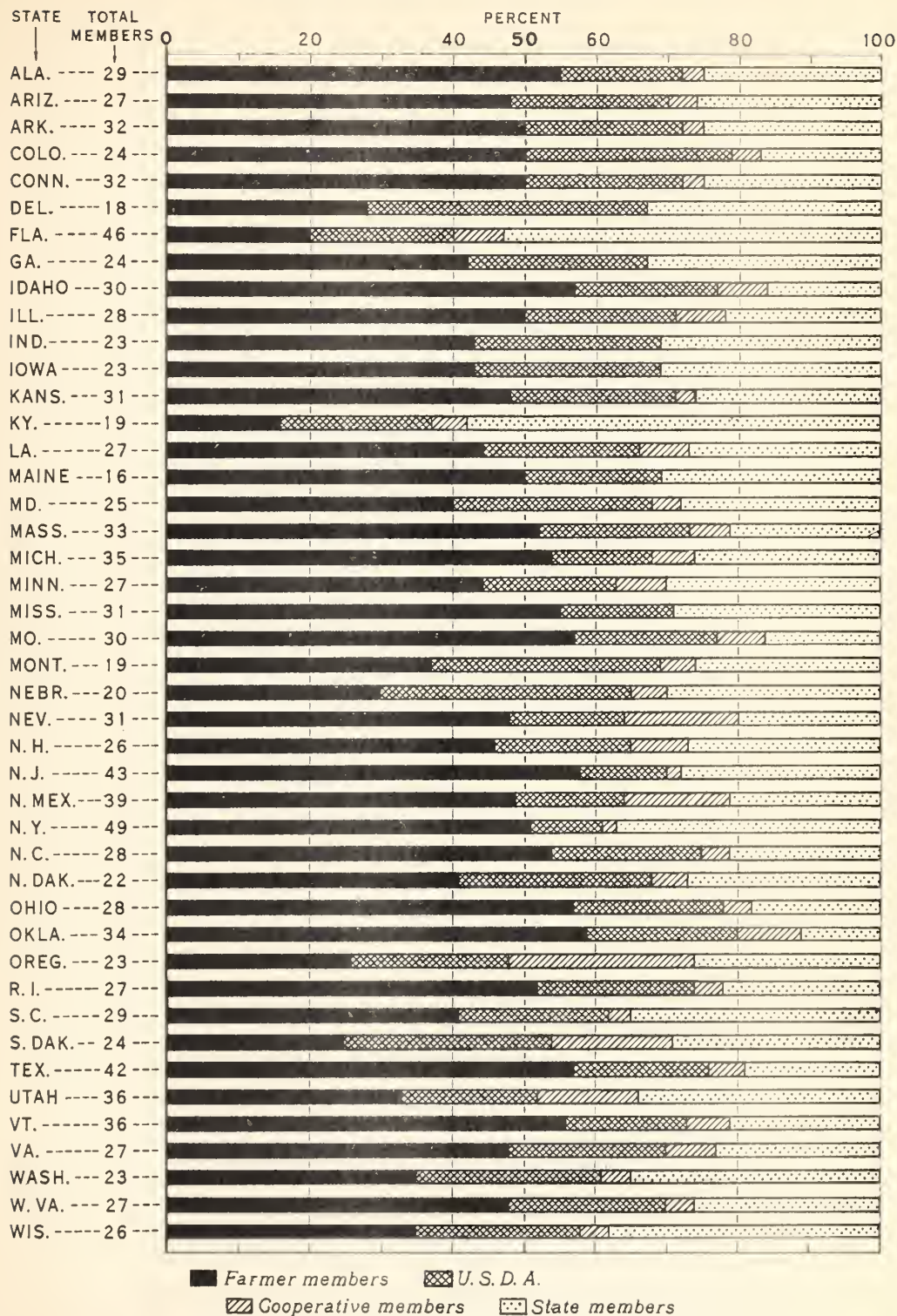
TYPE OF COUNTY LAND USE PLANNING ACTIVITIES BY PERCENTAGE OF ALL COUNTIES (1540) ENGAGED IN LAND USE PLANNING, JULY 1940



SIZE AND COMPOSITION OF LAND USE PLANNING COMMITTEES, BY STATES, JULY 1940



COMPOSITION OF STATE LAND USE PLANNING COMMITTEES, JULY 1940



COMPOSITION OF AVERAGE COUNTY LAND USE PLANNING COMMITTEE, JULY 1940

